

REMARKS

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-9 and 11-19 are pending in this application, the independent claims being claims 1 and 11. By this Amendment, the specification, Abstract and claims 1-9 are amended, claim 10 is canceled, and claims 11-19 are newly presented.

II. Summary of Action

In the Office Action, the drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R. §1.83(a), as failing to show a feature recited in claim 10. Claims 1, 3, 4 and 5 were objected to on formal grounds. Claims 1, 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,003,314 (Pearson). Claims 1, 6, 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,049,999 (Thibaudon) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,782,761 (Asberg). Claims 1 and 7-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,100,822 (Rosman) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,134,571 (Falque). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections respectfully are requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

III. Allowable Subject Matter

Initially, Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that the application contains allowable subject matter, and that claims 2-5 are allowable over the prior art. In this regard, claims 1-5 have been amended herein to improve their form, and dependent claims 2-5 are believed to remain in condition for allowance.

IV. Formal Amendments

Without conceding the propriety of the objection to the drawings, dependent claim 10 has been canceled. Accordingly, the objection to the drawings is believed moot.

Without conceding the propriety of the formal objections to the claims, claims 1-5 have been amended to improve their form under U.S. patent practice. Applicants believe the proposed amendments obviate the Examiner's objections.

V. Claim Amendments

The rejections of the claims over the cited art respectfully are traversed. Nevertheless, without conceding the propriety of the rejections, claim 1 has been amended more clearly to recite various novel features of the claimed invention. In particular, claim 1 has been amended to recite more clearly the feature of a geared motor mechanism including an electric motor and speed reducer having a coaxial shaft line extending perpendicular to the bull-wheel in a substantially vertical orientation. Support for the proposed amendments may be found in the original application. No new matter has been added.

Newly presented claims 11-19 have been added to provide applicants with an additional scope of protection commensurate with the disclosure. Claims 11-19 recite features that parallel the features of claims 1-9 with respect to a terminal of a transport ski lift. No new matter has been added.

VI. Claimed Invention

The present invention relates to a novel transport chair lift. In one aspect, as now recited in independent claim 1, the chair lift comprises a single overhead carrying-hauling rope, and fixed grips securing chairs to the rope. A terminal of the chair lift includes a bull-wheel on which the rope runs (the bull-wheel having a substantially horizontal orientation), a support device, a carriage movably mounted on the support device, and a geared motor mechanism including an electric motor and speed reducer having a coaxial shaft line extending perpendicularly to the bull-wheel in a substantially vertical orientation. Positioning means positions the carriage and the bull-wheel for use as a drive wheel and/or a tensioning wheel.

VII. Prior Art Distinguished

Applicants submit that the prior art fails to anticipate the claimed invention.

Moreover, Applicants submit that there are differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art, such that the prior art taken as a whole would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made.

The Pearson '341 patent relates to ski lift monitoring, and discloses a ski lift comprising a single overhead carrying-hauling rope (cable 10), chairs (29) secured to the rope, a bull-wheel (12) on which the rope runs, a carriage (20) movably supported on a support (22), and a geared motor arrangement including a motor (19) and a gear box (18) including a drive shaft (17) extending perpendicularly to the bull-wheel in a substantially vertical direction. However, Applicants submit that the Pearson '341 patent fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-described features of the present invention. Rather, in the Pearson '571 patent system, the motor (19) is arranged with a horizontal drive shaft for driving the gear box (18) - that is, perpendicular to the drive shaft of the gear box and the bull-wheel axis. Nowhere does the Pearson 341 patent disclose or suggest the feature of a geared motor mechanism including an electric motor and speed reducer having a coaxial shaft line extending perpendicular to the bull-wheel in a substantially vertical orientation, as disclosed and claimed in the present application.

The Thibaudon '999 patent relates to a speed control system for a chair lift, and discloses a chair lift including chairs (2) secured to a hauling-carrying rope (cable 10), a bull-wheel (16), and a geared motor arrangement (motor 20, mechanical speed reducer 21). However, Applicants submit that the Thibaudon '999 patent fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-described features of the present invention. Rather, like the Pearson '341 patent, in the Thibaudon '999 patent system the motor (20) is arranged with a horizontal drive shaft for driving the speed reducer (21) - that is, perpendicular to the drive shaft of the speed

reducer (21) and bull-wheel axis (see, Fig. 2). Nowhere does the Thibaudon '999 patent disclose or suggest the features of a geared motor mechanism including an electric motor and speed reducer having a coaxial shaft line extending perpendicular to the bull-wheel in a substantially vertical orientation, as disclosed and claimed in the present application.

The Asberg '761 patent relates to a cable tensioning device for ski lifts or aerial cableways, and discloses a tensioning device for a ski lift including an endless transporting cable (1), a support (beams 8,8',9,9'), a carriage (10, with post 4), a bull-wheel (2), and a motor (3). The tensioning device includes a nut device for a suitably rotatable screw (13), and a tension sensing device associated with a power source (19) for causing a rotating relative movement between the screw (13) and the nut device in order to start a power source (15) and effect a movement of the wheel (2) in a tension line direction. However, Applicants submit that the Asberg '761 patent fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-described features of the present invention. Rather, the Asberg '761 patent is understood merely to describe a direct drive motor system. Nowhere is the Asberg '761 patent understood to disclose or suggest the features of a geared motor mechanism including an electric motor and speed reducer having a coaxial shaft line extending perpendicular to the bull-wheel in a substantially vertical orientation, as disclosed and claimed in the present application. Nor is the Asberg '761 patent understood to add anything to the Thibaudon '999 patent that would make obvious the claimed invention.

The Rosman '822 patent relates to a drive system for a moving mechanism, and discloses a ski lift system including a bi-monocable cableway (cables 44, 45), drive wheels (40, 41) and drive motors (12). The drive system comprising an inner or outer annular member carrying first engagement means (teeth) which couple to second engagement means (pinion teeth) carried by the drive motors. However, Applicants submit that the Rosman '822 patent fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-described features of the present

invention. Rather, the Rosman '822 patent system describes a system having vertically oriented drive wheels 40, 41; each drive wheel includes three (3) drive motors (12), each having a horizontal output shaft that drives a pinion gear (34) located at an annular perimeter of the drive wheel. Nowhere does the Rosman '822 patent disclose or suggest the features of a bull-wheel having a substantially horizontal orientation, let alone the features of a single bull-wheel and geared motor mechanism including an electric motor and speed reducer having a coaxial shaft line extending perpendicular to the bull-wheel in a vertical orientation, as disclosed and claimed in the present application.

The Falque '571 patent relates to a controlled cable transport installation, and discloses a cable transport system comprising a single cable (3), a bull-wheel (pulley 2) and a geared motor arrangement including a motor (4), a reducer (13) and a vertical shaft (8). However, Applicants submit that the Falque '571 patent fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-described features of the present invention. Rather, like the Pearson '341 patent and the Thibaudon '999 patent, in the Falque '571 patent the motor (4) is arranged with a horizontal drive shaft for driving the reducer (13) - that is, perpendicular to the drive shaft of the reducer (13) and bull-wheel/pulley axis. Nowhere is the Falque '571 patent understood to disclose or suggest the features of a geared motor mechanism including an electric motor and speed reducer having a coaxial shaft line extending perpendicular to the bull-wheel in a substantially vertical orientation, as disclosed and claimed in the present application. Nor is the Falque '571 patent understood to add anything to the Rosman '822 patent that would make obvious the claimed invention.

Applicants submit that the cited art, alone or in any combination, fails to disclose or suggest the above-discussed combination of claim features.

For the above reasons, Applicants submit that claim 1 is allowable over the cited art.

Independent claim 11 recites features that parallel the features of claim 1 with respect to a terminal for a ski lift, and is believed allowable for the same reasons.

Claims 2-9 and 12-19 depend from claims 1 and 11, respectively, and are believed allowable for the same reasons. In particular, claims 12-15 recite features that parallel features previously indicated as allowable in claims 2-5. Moreover, each of dependent claims 2-9 and 12-19 recites additional features in combination with the features of its respective base claim, and is believed allowable in its own right. Individual consideration of the dependent claims respectfully is requested.

VII. Conclusion

Applicants believe the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Office Action, and submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration of the claims and passage to issue of the present application at the Examiner's earliest convenience earnestly are solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment:
Amended Abstract

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